

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, each year the Federal Government wastes countless billions of dollars on improper payments. I say "countless billions" because we do not know the magnitude of the problem. Incredible as it might seem, Federal agencies are not required by law to calculate how much money they spend improperly.

What we do know is that improper payments are a very serious problem in the Federal Government, based on the few voluntary estimates that some agencies submit for a handful of programs. The General Accounting Office, headed by the Comptroller General of the United States, who is very impartial and utilizes a nonpartisan, neutral approach, they looked at them and he says that there is \$20 billion in improper payments annually. The Office of Management and Budget recently updated the annual figure to about \$33 billion of improper payments.

Staggering as these amounts are, they likely represent only the tip of a very enormous iceberg.

For example, the Department of Health and Human Services reported making improper payments of more than \$12 billion in its Medicare fee-for-service program last year, but the Department does not even attempt to estimate improper payments made in the Medicaid program.

The obvious first step toward reducing this outrageous waste of taxpayers' money is to understand the extent of the problem. We must find out which programs are at risk and the causes of those risks. Only then can we develop cost-effective solutions.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4878, the "Improper Payments Information Act of 2002," takes this important first step. The bill requires Federal agencies to estimate the improper payments made in their programs. The bill also requires agencies to tell Congress and the American taxpayers what steps they are going to take to reduce those improper payments.

The Subcommittee on Government Efficiency, Financial Management, and Intergovernmental Relations, which I chair, has held numerous hearings over the years on various aspects of improper payments. These hearings have demonstrated the overwhelming need for H.R. 4878.

The administration strongly supports this legislation, H.R. 4878, and the bill has achieved broad bipartisan support in Congress. Our subcommittee's ranking member, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY), is a cosponsor of this legislation. So is our chairman of the full Committee on Government Reform, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), and also my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE).

On July 9, the House passed H.R. 4878 by voice vote under suspension of the rules. On October 15, the Senate passed an amended version of this bill by unanimous consent.

The Senate then added the amendments which tightened up the bill in several ways. They imposed an annual March 31 deadline for agencies to report their estimated improper payments to Congress. The amendments also require that the reports include the root causes of the improper payments and the results of any action agencies have taken to correct the problem. In addition, the Senate amendments require the Office of Management and Budget to provide guidelines to implement the bill within 6 months of its enactment.

In one respect, the Senate amendments are less stringent than the House bill, than the original bill. The amended bill requires agencies to report on their actions to reduce improper payments for any program in which the annual improper payments are estimated at \$10 million or more.

The House-approved bill had a lower threshold. However, I believe the Senate's amended threshold is excellent and reasonable.

Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the bill's threshold is simply the minimum requirement for reporting at less than the \$10 million amount. It does not or should not prevent agencies from voluntarily reporting on significant improper payments, even if they do not rise to the bill's minimum requirement.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to concur with the Senate amendments and send this bill to the President.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the people on the staff on our side, Bonnie Heald, the Staff Director of the subcommittee; Henry Wray, Senior Counsel who did most of the work; Dan Daly, Counsel; and we thank a lot Hank Savage, Assistant Counsel from the Office of Legislative Counsel.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am pleased to again be on the floor with the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) to move this bill on improper payments. We worked together to move this bill through the House last July and we are here today to accept the changes made by the Senate.

The Senate has asked that the reports on improper payments be limited to agencies where the aggregate amount is \$10 million or more, rather than the \$1 million in the original House bill. In addition, the Senate has clarified the timing of the reports coming to Congress. I concur with these changes.

There was one change proposed by the Senate following advice from the General Accounting Office that I found perplexing. The GAO proposed that agencies could avoid reporting on im-

proper payments if the agency concluded that the cost of estimating the level of improper payments was not "cost beneficial." In other words, if an agency does not know how many improper payments it is making, it can somehow conclude that it is not worth knowing how many improper payments it is making. I was concerned that the provision simply created another loophole for agencies to avoid addressing this problem, and I am pleased that the Senate chose not to include this provision.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate a point I made last July. In programs that provide payments directly to the poor, improper payments often result from the complexities of the program rules or from errors in administering the program. These kinds of errors should not become another burden on the poor. I hope these agencies will take the opportunity created by this bill to find ways to avoid these kinds of errors and, if they occur, to consider the impact on the needy recipient and assure that any negative impact is minimized.

I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) for his hard work on this bill and for working in such a collegial manner throughout the process of passing this legislation. I would also like to end in the gentleman's tradition by thanking the professional democratic staff David McMillan for his work on the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I have no other requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 4878.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendment was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF INTENTION TO OFFER MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 4628, INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2003

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 7(c) of rule XXII, I hereby notify the House of my intention to offer a motion to instruct conferees tomorrow on H.R. 4628, the Intelligence Authorization bill, which has been in conference since October 3, 2002. The form of the motion is as follows:

I move that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 4628, be instructed to take such actions as may be appropriate to ensure that a conference report is filed on the bill prior to November 14, 2002.

Mr. Speaker, this motion simply instructs the conferees on the Intelligence Authorization bill to complete

their work and file a conference report prior to Thursday, November 14, 2002.

REPORT ON NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO THE 1979 IRANIAN EMERGENCY AND ASSETS BLOCKING—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 107-278)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on International Relations and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report prepared by my Administration on the national emergency with respect to Iran that was declared in Executive Order 12170 of November 14, 1979.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, November 12, 2002.

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO IRAN—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 107-279)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on International Relations and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmit to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the Iran emergency declared by Executive Order 12170 on November 14, 1979, is to continue in effect beyond November 14, 2002, to the *Federal Register* for publication. The most recent notice continuing this emergency was published in the *Federal Register* on November 13, 2001, (66 FR 56966).

Our relations with Iran have not yet returned to normal, and the process of implementing the January 19, 1981, agreements with Iran is still underway. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared on November 14, 1979, with respect to Iran, beyond November 14, 2002.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, November 12, 2002.

CONTINUATION OF EMERGENCY REGARDING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 107-280)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on International Relations and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems declared by Executive Order 12938 on November 14, 1994, as amended, is to continue in effect beyond November 14, 2002, to the *Federal Register* for publication. The most recent notice continuing this emergency was published in the *Federal Register* on November 13, 2001 (66 FR 56965).

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means of delivering them continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined the national emergency previously declared must continue in effect beyond November 14, 2002.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, November 6, 2002.

□ 1545

EXPRESSING SORROW OF THE HOUSE AT THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE PAUL D. WELLSTONE, SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 598) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 598

Resolved, That the House has heard with profound sorrow of the death of the Honorable Paul D. Wellstone, a Senator from the State of Minnesota.

Resolved, That the Clerk communicate these resolutions to the Senate and transmit a copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

Resolved, That when the House adjourns today, it adjourn as a further mark of respect to the memory of the deceased Senator.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KOLBE). The gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, 20 years ago I had returned to Minnesota from a human rights inquiry trip with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee in El Salvador, where we inquired into abuses of human rights visited upon Salvadorans and the four American women, three church women and one lay woman.

We visited the blood-spattered streets of San Antonio Abad, the site of La Matanza, the massacre outside of San Salvador. We met with numerous victims of violence by the government and resolved to take action in the Congress on our return to the United States.

On my return, I was asked by the President of the student body of Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, to come and address the students on the experience that I had just encountered.

It was an overwhelming response. The place for the meeting was filled to overflowing, and students wanted to gather afterward. They asked me if I would come and join them at the home of one of the professors, which I did.

Of course, at that meeting, it was very animated and intense questioning that came from the host, a young professor, who impressed me with his deep sense of caring, his feeling about this issue, his desire to do justice. I was not quite sure of his name, and I asked again: PAUL WELLSTONE.

I said, Professor, you ought to think about running for public office. He said, indeed, I am. I am considering running for State auditor. Well, that was hardly a place from which to make statewide policy, but it was something that he wanted to do to get into the public arena, and he felt there was a message that he could convey. As was later revealed, however, his dyslexia prevented him from really grasping numbers in the way that other folks do.

Nonetheless, he conducted a spirited campaign, and lost to a gentleman named Arnie Carlson, who served as auditor for several years, and then later ran for Governor and won in the same year that PAUL WELLSTONE ran for Senator and won: 1990.

In between those two dates was a very high level of spirited activism by PAUL WELLSTONE, most notable of which was leading the resistance to construction of a power line across the State of Minnesota to be built by a generation power company of the rural electrification system which had really lost touch with its member cooperatives and the people that the co-op was to serve.

PAUL WELLSTONE called them to accountability, called them and mounted a movement across the State to hold hearings, to have public sessions to explain the necessity for this power line running through the backyard of homes and through farms, and what possible adverse side effects there